



SOIL AND WATER *Resources*



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February 2017

Carol Comer Named Director of Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Gov. Eric Greitens named Carol S. Comer as the Director of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources on Jan. 18, 2017. As director, Comer will lead the department's efforts to protect our air, land and water; preserve our unique natural and historic places; and provide recreational and learning opportunities for everyone.

Comer has extensive experience with environmental issues in government and business. She understands that environmental protection and economic growth are not mutually exclusive. "You can't have a healthy environment without a healthy economy-and you can't have a healthy economy without a healthy environment." Missouri can protect its air, land and water quality while encouraging economic growth so that Missouri and all Missourians prosper.

Comer previously served as Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) under former Governor and Vice-President Mike Pence from 2015 until joining the Department of Natural Resources. Comer also served both as IDEM's General Counsel and Chief of Staff. Prior to that, she served as a senior administrative law judge for the Indiana Board of Tax Review and as an Administrative Law Judge with the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission. Comer began her career in private practice with nearly a decade of experience representing companies on environmental and utility matters; first at Plews and Shadley in Indianapolis and later at Lewis and Roca in Phoenix, Arizona.



Carol S. Comer, Director, Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Comer received her undergraduate degree from Indiana University School of Business and a joint master's and law degree from Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs and Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law, where she was the law school's first Environmental Law Fellow.

Soil and Water Districts Commission Holds February Meeting During Natural Resources Conference at the Lake of the Ozarks

The Missouri Soil and Water Districts Commission held its February 1 meeting during the Missouri Natural Resources Conference held at the Lake of the Ozarks.

The commission voted to reappoint Gary Vandiver as chair and H. Ralph Gaw as Vice-chair of the commission.

The commission agenda included cost-share program and supplemental allocation updates, framework for requests for proposals for research and monitoring projects, Soil Health Assessment Center update, and informational discussions about cover crops, Missouri lakes and streams, and water resource topics. The commission heard and approved a variance request and approved new supervisor appointments.



Commissioners Glen Cope, H. Ralph Gaw, Jeff Lance and Tim Martin discussed the issues at the Feb. 1 Soil and Water District Commission meeting.

Dates to Remember

April 20 - Soil and Water Districts Commission meeting at the Lewis and Clark State Office Building in Jefferson City.
<http://on.mo.gov/1RR1biP>

Missouri Natural Resources Conference Held at Lake of the Ozarks in February

Each year the Missouri Natural Resources Conference hosts about 800 people working in the natural resources field who meet to exchange information and ideas and encourage continued cooperation among resource professionals, agencies and other natural resource stakeholders. This year's theme was "Soil Health the Foundation of Conservation" with many workshops available about soil and water conservation and other natural resource topics.

The opening session featured the topic *What is Soil Health* presented by Dr. Jerry Hatfield, laboratory director and supervisory plant physiologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service in Ames, Iowa. Dr. Ryan Stockwell, Agriculture Manager with the National Wildlife Federation, National Advocacy Center in Washington, DC, presented *Wildlife Benefits of Soil Health*.

An awards ceremony recognized the contributions of many who have dedicated their lives and careers to improving natural resources for everyone.



Karen Brinkman, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships and Initiatives, greets the crowd at the opening session of the 2017 Natural Resources Conference.



Keynote speaker Dr. Jerry Hatfield, Agricultural Research Service, talked about the topic What is Soil Health.



Keynote speaker Dr. Ryan Stockwell, National Wildlife Federation Agriculture Manager, talked about wildlife benefits of soil health.



Andrea Mayus and John Johnson provided information at the Soil and Water Conservation Program's 319 Section display.



Mike Morris, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) District Conservationist and President of the Show-Me Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society presents the Soil and Water Conservation Society Environmental Conservationist of the Year Award to Ross Braun, NRCS retired.



Donna Brandt, research specialist from the University of Missouri Soil Health Assessment Center spoke in one of the many workshops.

New Look Unveiled for the Missouri Soil and Water Conservation Districts Website



A newly updated Missouri Soil and Water Conservation Districts website is now available online.

The home page features a drop down box with an alphabetical list of links to the 114 soil and water conservation district offices or on a PC you can navigate by clicking on the interactive county map. The webpages are designed to be phone-friendly by automatically fitting text and graphic in the viewing window.

A new modern look is accompanied by easy navigation to information about each district including quick links to:

- News
- Upcoming Meetings and Events
- Board and Election Information
- Landowner Assistance
- Rental Equipment
- Local Projects
- Needs Assessment
- History
- Links
- Forms
- Job Announcements
- Staff Directory and Directions

You can also sign up online to receive email and text messages from the districts.

Decommissioning Wells

The Soil and Water Conservation Program is working with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Missouri Geological Survey, Wellhead Protection Section, regarding the N351 Well Decommissioning cost-share practice. Personnel with the Wellhead-Protection Section are available to answer questions from soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) regarding well decommissioning.

If a SWCD is working with a landowner to decommission a bedrock well, districts will refer the landowner to the Wellhead Protection Section so they can discuss with the landowner the special requirements for closing a bedrock well. Landowners should be aware that whenever any type of well is decommissioned they must record the decommissioned well with the Department of Natural Resources' Geological Survey Program, Wellhead Protection Section, by submitting a *Well Plugging Registration Record* form. The form is available on the department's website at <http://dnr.mo.gov/forms/780-1603-f.pdf>.

A brochure with additional information about plugging abandoned wells and contact information for the Wellhead Protection Section is available online at <https://dnr.mo.gov/pubs/pub2281.pdf>.



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